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FROM THE OFFICE OF:
L. C. ARENDS, M.C. (R.Ill.)
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12 Noon

SPEECH OF REPRESENTATIVE LESLIE C. ARENDS, (R.Ill.) RANKING MINORITY MEMBER OF THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE, ON THE FLOOR OF THE HOUSE, CONCERNING THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most important agencies of our Government, particularly during this period of international uncertainties and anxieties, is our Central Intelligence Agency.

The time has long since arrived when someone should take cognizance of the baseless criticism that has been and continues to be heaped upon it. That is my purpose here today, as a member of the CIA Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services since its establishment. I do not purport to speak as an authority on all the functions and activities of the CIA. But I do presume to speak with some factual knowledge about the CIA as an organization and how it functions.

I do not mean to imply that the CIA should be above criticism. No agency of government should be above criticism. Constructive criticism makes for improvement, and there is always room for improvement.

But much of the criticism directed at the CIA is not constructive. It cannot possibly be, as it is not based on facts. It is based on half-truths and distortions. Indeed, some of it constitutes complete untruths, with no foundation whatever in fact or in reason. This is what concerns me. Something once said, however false, is readily oft-repeated and in time is accepted as a fact although an outright falsehood. And we know there are those who would, if they could, discredit the CIA. Others of us, having no such intention, unwittingly become their victims.

Let me present one illustration. I refer to the much publicized, much discussed case of the Polish defector, Michal Goleniewski. I refer to the irresponsible series of articles concerning the CIA that has been recently published in the New York Journal American.

Among these wild accusations is that the CIA has attempted to prevent Michal Goleniewski from appearing before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee. They go so far as to charge that the CIA has quashed subpoenas. That simply is not true. A simple telephone call to the Chairman of that Subcommittee would have brought forth the information that going back to last August, when the first subpoena was served on this man, the Executive branch of the Government has been cooperative with the Senate Subcommittee throughout.

Contrary to what has been reported in the press, the postponements of Michal Goleniewski's appearance before the Senate Subcommittee were at the request of the man himself. And the Subcommittee agreed to his request.

I might add that the CIA Subcommittee, of which I am a member, went into every aspect of this case. I am personally satisfied that the publicized statements purported to come from Michal Goleniewski are not correct. The information as reported in the press is not in agreement with the information Michal Goleniewski has made available to many departments of Government.

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Stories such as have been circulated on this case display a reckless regard of the truth. They can be harmful, and those who circulate them do a great disservice to maintaining public confidence in the CIA.

Before commenting further with respect to the CIA and unfounded criticisms of it, perhaps I should first take cognizance of the criticism of the CIA Subcommittee, of which I am a member. It is quite understandable that some Members of Congress might feel we are not as well acquainted with the operations of the CIA as we should be. No one, except members of the subcommittee itself, has any knowledge of just how extensively and intensively we inquire into the activities of this intelligence agency. We hold no public hearings. We issue no reports. We cannot do otherwise and preserve the effectiveness of the CIA as a secret fact-gathering agency on an international scale. We can only hope that the House has sufficient confidence in our subcommittee, as individuals and as a committee, to accept our assurances that we are kept well informed and we have no hesitancy of keeping a close eye and ear on CIA operations.

I was very much distressed to read an article in Esquire magazine, written by a distinguished Member of Congress -- one of the best and one of my good friends -- in which he says: "the Members of four subcommittees themselves, by definition, have relatively low status." Not because I am a member of one of those subcommittees, but for the other members of our Armed Services Subcommittee on CIA, I must take exception to the implication of that statement as to their status.

The membership of our subcommittee is comprised of the distinguished Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Mr. Vinson, the distinguished ranking majority member, Mr. Rivers, and another distinguished ranking member, Mr. Hebert. Serving with them are the other very distinguished members: Mr. Price, Mr. Bray, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Huddleston, and Mr. Osmers.

I am not at liberty to announce the members of the other subcommittees in the Congress dealing with CIA matters; but I can assure the House they are not "by definition, of relatively low status."

The article to which I refer goes on to state, "but even had those Subcommittees both status and time the difficulties involved in dividing jurisdiction among the four would I think be insuperable."

This point deserves analysis. Since the proposed solution to the matter of low status and little time would be to establish a Joint Committee on Foreign Information and Intelligence, several questions arise.

In addition to CIA, there are other intelligence activities which are component parts of the Department of Defense, the Department of State and the Atomic Energy Commission. I do not believe that the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the Armed Services Committee or the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy would be likely to relinquish their responsibilities for legislative oversight of the components of those departments which are presently under their jurisdiction. We would thus be establishing a Joint Committee on Foreign Intelligence that would, in fact, be superimposed on the existing committees and subcommittees. This brief analysis does not begin to delve into the jurisdictional problems that would thus be raised within the congressional committee structure and the Congress itself.

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In the same Esquire article it is asserted in connection with the Bay of Pigs situation, and I now quote, "Not only was CIA shaping policy -- perhaps understandable because of the absence of direction from policy making organs of the government -- but that policy was patently at odds with State Department thinking." The author of the article then adds that he does not wish to fully rehearse the events which preceded the Bay of Pigs, nor do I. This accusation, however, is not founded in fact but, on the contrary, is flatly inconsistent with the truth. It will be recalled that the White House issued a statement on April 24, 1961 saying, "President Kennedy has stated from the beginning that as President he bears sole responsibility for the events of the past few days. He has stated it on all occasions and he restates it now so that it will be understood by all. The President is strongly opposed to anyone within or without the administration attempting to shift the responsibility." To assume or assert that CIA shaped policy and then executed it when that policy was at odds with the official policy of the Department of State not only demonstrates a lack of knowledge of the coordination and control procedures in the Executive Branch but further implies that the Director of Central Intelligence or other officials of the CIA are violating their oath of office by willfully disregarding the views and instructions of the President. Based on my knowledge, the assertion and implications of the statement are false.

The Esquire article indicates the author's recognition that a high degree of secrecy is essential to the workings of the intelligence community and with this I agree. But the article continues by saying there are dangers if public confidence in the intelligence establishment erodes. The article continues by stating that such erosion "is less likely if a body of the people's representatives properly constituted and carefully chosen by the leadership of the two houses of Congress remains continuously aware of the activities of the intelligence community." Based on my long-term membership of the CIA Subcommittee, I again can assure the House that the Subcommittee has been continuously aware of Agency activities. I must reemphasize that this Subcommittee in fact is properly constituted and carefully chosen by the distinguished Chairman of this Committee.

A

The statement has been made that CIA meddles in policy. This is an often heard allegation about the Agency, but the facts do not support it. CIA is an intelligence organization and takes its direction from the policy makers. The late President Kennedy commented on this in October 1963 when irresponsible sources were alleging that CIA was making policy in VIETNAM. He said, "I must say I think the reports are wholly untrue. The fact of the matter is that Mr. McCone sits in the National Security Council. I imagine I see him at least three or four times a week, ordinarily. We have worked very closely together in the National Security Council in the last two months attempting to meet the problems we face in South Vietnam. I can find nothing, and I have looked through the record very carefully over the last nine months, and I could go back further, to indicate that the CIA has done anything but support policy. It does not create policy; it attempts to execute it in those areas where it has competence and responsibility. ~~The President went on to say:~~ I can just assure you flatly that the CIA has not carried out independent activities but has operated under close control of the Director of Central Intelligence, operating with the cooperation of the National Security Council and under my instructions. ~~So I think while the CIA may have made mistakes, as we all do, on~~ different occasions, and has had many successes which may go unheralded, in my opinion in this case it is unfair to charge them as they have been charged. I think they have done a good job." This was President Kennedy's statement.

B

It has been asserted that there are no effective checks on the Ahency's activities. The facts are that every activity the Agency engages in is approved in advance at the appropriate policy

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level. It is also said that "Crucial decisions are made for us and in our name of which we know nothing." This is not true. The Subcommittee, of which I am a member, is kept informed on a current basis of the activities of the Agency and, as I mentioned before, this organization is not a decision-making body but one which carries out the instructions of others.

The magazine article I mentioned speaks of the personnel in the Agency, and acknowledges that CIA officials are among the most distinguished in the entire federal establishment. With this I would readily agree. But the Author of the Esquire article is in error when he says that CIA is "served by only one politically responsible officer." Both the Director and Deputy Director of the Agency are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, and I would note that all other employees of the Agency can be terminated by the Director of his own authority. The implication that they are not responsible is beneath reply. He says that CIA relies heavily on the services of retired military officers. The facts do not support this as there are very few retired military officers in the Agency. Of the top 46 executives in the Central Intelligence Agency, only two are retired military officers, and the proportion of retired military officers to professionals throughout the Agency is even smaller. He says that the Agency relies heavily on services of political refugees. It is true that it does on occasion use political refugees, but a misimpression is given here. These individuals are used when their expertise and area knowledge is required and the information they provide is extensively cross-checked against a great variety of other sources.

I would note also that my esteemed colleague in one paragraph indicates that the daily chore of coordinating and cross-checking intelligence data is the responsibility of the Defense Intelligence Agency. According to the National Security Act of 1947 the Central Intelligence Agency is actually charged by law with the coordination of intelligence. The law reads, "For the purpose of coordinating the intelligence activities of the several Government departments and agencies in the interest of national security, it shall be the duty of the Agency, under the direction of the National Security Council -- to make recommendations to the National Security Council for the coordination of such intelligence activities of the departments and agencies of the Government as relate to the national security." As a matter of actual practice the responsibility for coordination over the years has been that of the Director of Central Intelligence, who has been supported in this regard by the CIA.

The magazine article also makes the statement that CIA is both the chief fact gatherer and the chief agency for coordination. As I have just mentioned, the Agency is charged by law with coordination, and it is also charged, and I quote, "to correlate and evaluate intelligence relating to the national security, and provide for the appropriate dissemination of such intelligence within the Government." In effect, what this means is that the CIA takes intelligence from all different sources, departments and agencies and produces the national intelligence required by the policy makers.

During the years that I have served on the CIA Subcommittee I have sat many hours questioning the Director and other Agency officials about their activities and how they go about their work. On many occasions this Subcommittee has quietly looked into some of the then current accusations against CIA.

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Let me assure you, Mr. Speaker, that we have always received the information needed. Also, we have been privileged to learn of many events in the secrecy of our meetings before the events have happened.

The CIA officials who have been before our Committee have at all times been responsive and frank in their discussions with us.

I do not believe that baseless charges against the CIA are serving the national interest. If there are those who have information which they believe would be of assistance to the CIA Subcommitte in its review of Agency activities let them come forward -- we would welcome such information. Let me make it clear, however, that those who would expect the Subcommittee then to report on its findings will be due for disappointment. By the very nature of the Agency's mission, revelation of its activities will truly destroy it.

It is my view that the establishment of CIA in 1947 by the Congress was extremely wise and showed amazing foresight into the problems that would face this country in the years to follow. The wisdom of the Congress in establishing this Agency to provide the President with the necessary information on which to base our foreign policy has been borne out by the performance of the Agency. I do not claim that the Agency has been 100 per cent correct. But I do believe it has provided the President and our policymakers with the tools that they must have.

Certainly the Armed Services Committee and the Appropriations Committee of both Houses have been enabled to judge more correctly our defense needs on the basis of the information CIA has been able to provide. While the Agency is a newcomer in the history of the nation and among its foreign counterparts, I wish to state now that it probably is the finest intelligence agency in the world today. I believe that the Congress and the country should applaud the dedicated and highly professional career officers of CIA for the magnificent job they have performed over the years.

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